

PRECAUTIONS AND CONTRAINDICATIONS

Immunosuppression

Corticosteroids, other immunosuppressive agents, and immunosuppressive illnesses (such as HIV infection) can interfere with the development of active immunity and predispose the patient to developing rabies. Immunosuppressive agents should not be administered during postexposure therapy, unless essential for the treatment of other conditions. When rabies postexposure prophylaxis is administered to persons receiving corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive therapy or to persons having an immunosuppressive illness, it is especially important that serum be tested for rabies antibody to ensure that an adequate response has developed. (Please see laboratory information on page 14.)

Pregnancy

Because of the potential consequences of an inadequately treated rabies exposure and limited data that indicate that fetal abnormalities have not been associated with rabies vaccination, pregnancy is not considered a contraindication to postexposure prophylaxis. If a substantial unavoidable risk of exposure to rabies exists, preexposure prophylaxis may also be indicated during pregnancy.

Allergies

Persons with histories of hypersensitivity should be given rabies vaccines with caution. When a patient with a history suggesting hypersensitivity to HDCV, RVA or PCEC must be given that vaccine, antihistamines can be given; epinephrine should be readily available to counteract anaphylactic reactions, and the person should be carefully observed.